

IN-BETWEEN MUSIC: THE MUSICAL CREATION OF *CHOLO* IDENTITY  
IN COCHABAMBA, BOLIVIA

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Thesis Prepared for the Degree of  
MASTER OF MUSIC

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH TEXAS

August 2007

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Jones, Eric, In-between Music: The Musical Creation of *Cholo* Identity in Cochabamba, Bolivia. Master of Music (Musicology), August 2007, 69 pp., 5 figures, 7 musical examples, references, 66 titles.

Music and identity are inextricably linked. While a particular social or ethnic group's music may reflect characteristics of that group, it also functions in creating the identity of the group. In Andean Bolivia, the *cholo* ethnic group has very subjective and constantly changing boundaries. *Cholo*-ness is made possible through mediated cultural performances of all types, in which members actively choose elements from both *criollo* and Indian cultures. Music is one particularly effective way in which *cholos* create and maintain their identity. This thesis focuses on the ways in which *cholos* use music to create a hybrid identity in and around Cochabamba, Bolivia.

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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to sincerely thank the following people who in various ways helped to make this project possible: Celia Sutiri, Hernán and Mabel Orsi, Miguel and Liliana Esprella, Gina and Milenko Mostacedo, Vivan Orsi, the Nogales family, Elizabeth Schwimmer, and Claudia Jones. I am also grateful for the generous Fulbright grant from the Institute of International Education that helped fund my research.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Music is ubiquitous in urban Bolivia. It would be difficult to avoid hearing music in some form during a typical day in anywhere in the country. Radios constantly blare from restaurants, storefronts, and passing cars, taxis, busses, and trucks. Outdoor concerts in public parks and plazas compete daily with busking musicians, from professional folkloric performers to homeless migrant children offering songs for spare change. In the course of my fieldwork, as I became accustomed to this constant musical collage, certain popular strains become more apparent. Some of the most prominent included international pop and rock music, chicha-cumbias, and *música folklórica*, the polished, ready-for-export “national” music.

Little by little, another type of music emerged from the variety of Bolivian music I was hearing. While I turned the radio dial snatches of this unfamiliar music jumped out at me from the static. When I walked through the markets strains of this music floated out from behind walls, from inside tiny stalls, and from passing trucks heading back to the countryside after delivering loads of produce to the market vendors. The middle-class family with whom I lived in Cochabamba told me this music, associated with lower working classes in urban Andean Bolivia, was out of tune, ugly, base, and simply not worth my time to investigate. During my subsequent research, I realized this was a widely shared attitude among the middle and upper classes in Bolivia. Many wondered why I was “wasting” my time on this music, implying, sometimes directly, that it was not worthy of serious study because it was *basura* (trash) and was only fit for the lower



classes. As I became more interested in this music, however, I realized it does indeed merit serious study. I have set out to perform such a study here.

## Bolivia

Bolivia, a landlocked country in the middle of South America, has a colossally varied physical landscape (see Fig. 0.1). Its enormous scopes of varying languages, social classes, and ethnic groups echo the stark differences in altitude, aridity, vegetation, and ecosystems. When traveling from east to west in Bolivia, ranges of the Andes abruptly rise up, carving a northwest to southeast diagonal line through the country. Continuing westward, one passes through the valley regions, comprised of fertile valleys surrounded by towering arms of the Andes. Finally, one crosses these ranges and reaches the *altiplano*, a dry, open expanse of land between 12,000 and 13,000 feet in elevation, which makes up the western strip of the country.

Cochabamba, Bolivia's fourth largest city after La Paz, El Alto, and Santa Cruz, is well-known among other things for being a center for folkloric music, for its large white population, and for its market, the Cancha, which is the largest in the country. Located in the valley region of Bolivia, between the eastern lowlands and western mountains, the Cochabamba valley has a favorable climate for agriculture. The city's proximity to the tropical fruit, vegetable, and coca producing regions on the eastern slopes of the Andes and the potato and quinoa-producing highland regions makes its market a national hub for the buying and selling of produce. The Cancha draws large numbers of temporary workers and semi-permanent migrants from all over Bolivia (not to mention foreign tourists, for whom the Cancha is listed as an attraction in tourist



Figure 1.1: Map of South America.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> “South America,” CIA World Factbook, accessed June 19, 2007, [https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/reference\\_maps/south\\_america.html](https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/reference_maps/south_america.html)

guidebooks). Its location roughly halfway between La Paz and Santa Cruz on Bolivia's major east-west highway brings travelers, tourists, and truck drivers through Cochabamba on a regular basis—an influx that contributes to the city's multicultural nature. In fact, Cochabamba is known as a city whose population consists largely of immigrant groups,<sup>2</sup> and is populated by an increasing number of migrants who are changing the ethnic makeup of the city. Accordingly, Cochabamba is known as Bolivia's center of ethnic hybridity<sup>3</sup> (see Fig. 1.2).



Figure 1.2: Map of Bolivia.<sup>4</sup>

Cochabamba's location in the middle of the country, its physical in-between-ness, is compounded by its social and ethnic hybridity. Traditionally, in Bolivia's rigid social structure, *criollos*, the white people in power positions of the government and national

<sup>2</sup> Xavier Albó, "Por qué el campesino qochalo es diferente?", *Cuarto intermedio* 2 (1987): 43-59.

<sup>3</sup> See Robert Albó, "Virtual patriliney: Image mutability and populist politics in Quillacollo, Bolivia," *Political and Legal Anthropology Review* 20:1 (1997): 73-92.

<sup>4</sup> "Bolivia," CIA World Factbook, accessed June 19, 2007, <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bl.html>

business interests, occupy the “top” of a continuum of power, what Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui calls the “horizontal axis of identities.”<sup>5</sup> The much smaller Bolivian middle class occupies the middle of the continuum, and those at the bottom include the rural and urban poor: *indios*, *campesinos*, and *cholos*.<sup>6</sup>

It is difficult anywhere in Bolivia for one to transcend these apparently rigid social strata, but it is more possible in Cochabamba. The social hierarchy is slightly less rigid here than in the other major Andean metropolitan areas in Bolivia, including La Paz, El Alto, Oruro, and Potosí. While *criollos* have traditionally monopolized most of the power in the city and the country, the national election of a populist government in 2005 that was rooted in and around Cochabamba has given new impetus to lower working classes’ claims on legitimacy. This has occurred in Cochabamba more anywhere else.<sup>7</sup> These classes dominate Cochabamba’s large service and market economies, which provide more opportunities for a certain amount of economic and social mobility for poor rural migrants. Many of the members of this large working class are migrants from rural

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<sup>5</sup> Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, “La raíz: colonizadores y colonizados,” in *Violencias encubiertas en Bolivia*, ed. Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui and Raúl Barrios, Vol. I: Cultura y política (La Paz: CIPCA; Aruwi yiri, 1993).

<sup>6</sup> The terms *indio*, *campesino*, and *Cholo* have a myriad of meanings. The term *indio* is commonly used in Bolivia to refer to the most rural indigenous Bolivians – those supposedly “untainted” by modernity. Here, I use the term and its English equivalent, Indian, to refer to characteristics associated with indigenous Bolivians. I use the term *campesino* to refer to poor rural Bolivians, most often subsistence farmers, whose culture is a mixture of both rural indigenous and urban European traditions. *Cholo*, as I use it, refers to *campesinos* (and their descendents) who have migrated to the cities – urban *campesinos*, in an oxymoronic sense. Thus, I use the terms “migrants” and “Cholos” interchangeably here. Cholos generally participate in what are seen as lower or working class occupations: the market and service economies of the cities. Historically, the terms *campesino* and *Cholo* emerged as euphemisms to avoid using the denigrating “indio.” “Indio” has been readopted by *campesinos* themselves as a sign for a combative re-assumption of a marginalized, subaltern identity.

<sup>7</sup> In Bolivia, race and ethnicity are inextricably linked to and defined by social class. Like Marcia Stephenson, I use the term “criollo” as interchangeable with the terms “white,” “upper class,” “elite,” and “dominant.” See Marcia Stephenson, *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999): 207.

areas of Cochabamba and other departments who have left unproductive farms in search of a life in the city.<sup>8</sup>

In Bolivia, *cholos* are members of a subaltern ethnic group that relies much more on cultural conventions and social situations than it does on physical or ethnic differences to create their identities. Although they are of indigenous heritage, *cholo* identities are also linked to urban Bolivia, and are thus simultaneously connected to the rural countryside and to national and international forces that permeate the country's urban spaces.<sup>9</sup> As is the case with many migrants in Latin America, *cholos* are also often seen as existing somewhere between the perceived modernity of urban national culture and perceived tradition of indigenous culture.<sup>10</sup> Their identity is in permanent redefinition in response to changing local cultural circumstances. Members of this group use cultural elements, especially musical practices, to create and maintain some of the boundaries that give *cholo*-ness meaning. Musical practices contribute directly to this creation of *cholo*-ness.

The various musical practices employed by any ethnic group form multilayered, multidimensional realities, and each layer includes its own specific themes and legends. These dimensions range from the technical (including tuning systems, harmonic patterns, and vocal timbre, for example) to the conceptual (identity formation, ideas of community, and ethnic group boundary maintenance). In Bolivia, migrants, through musical practices

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<sup>8</sup> Cochabamba refers to both the city of that name and the department – roughly equivalent to states in the United States – in which it is located.

<sup>9</sup> Inherent in these connections is another set of opposites; Cholos' rural, indigenous ties link them in the popular imagination to the country's perceived pre-modern Indian past, while their ties to urban national and international market forces link them to an urban, modern future.

<sup>10</sup> Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

and performance,<sup>11</sup> actively create a *cholo* ethnicity that can be seen in one sense as a composite of their musical practices. Many of these musical practices draw upon European traditions, others on Indian traditions, some are mixtures of both, and still others are completely new. Through an examination of this rich, hybrid music, it becomes rapidly apparent that music is crucial in the creation of *cholo* identity.

In this work I examine migrants' music in Cochabamba and examine how it is used to construct *cholo* identity. The creation and performance of this music reinforce social boundaries that are critical in the production of the migrants' *cholo* identity. Rather than this music existing simply as a *cholo* cultural byproduct, *cholos* use it to infuse their identity with meaning. This occurs through strategic positioning by the actors themselves, achieved by means of the active selection and rejection of certain cultural elements, coupled with the recombination and creation of new ones. *Cholos*, for example, can strategically use dress as a means to "pass" through social categories – using Western style clothing to avoid being labeled *Indio*, or appropriating Western-influenced clothing like the *pollera* (heavy skirts favored by *cholitas*) as a symbol of *cholo* identity.<sup>12</sup> Or, when performing music, a migrant might lapse completely into Quechua while singing, but use a harmonic pattern of European influence. Alternatively, she may sing in Spanish but connect phrases of irregular length and play charango in a rural strumming style. The fluctuating boundaries of the *cholo* ethnic group are enacted, and the very notion of *cholo*-ness performed, through music.

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<sup>11</sup> By performance, I refer not only to music performance in the literal sense, but also to the performance of ethnicity through musical practices.

<sup>12</sup> Olivia Harris, "Ethnic Identity and Market Relations: Indians and Mestizos in the Andes," in *Ethnicity, Markets, and Migration in the Andes: At the Crossroads of History and Anthropology*, ed. Brooke Larson and Olivia Harris, with Enrique Tandeter (Durham: Duke University Press, 1995): 359.

## The *Cholo* Conundrum

How does one begin to examine an ethnicity so heavily based on intangible characteristics? The difficulty in understanding *cholo* identity arises from its conditional character, its constant reaction to other ethnic groups, its mobility, and its mercurialness. These very difficulties, however, are the core qualities that make *cholo* identity meaningful and allow it to exist. It is precisely from this cultural space - one filled with uncertainty, constant and rapid change, realignment, and reorganization - that a hybrid *cholo* way of being starts to make sense.

Individual, social, cultural, and physical mobilities characterize the in-between space of *cholo* identity in urban Bolivia. The group is characterized by persistent changes in self-identification. *Cholos* distinguish themselves from other ethnicities through the frequency and ease with which they self-identify as members of different ethnic groups. Individually, a person may consider him or herself a *cholo* in a particular situation but *Indio* in another, or may self-identify as *Mestizo* while maintaining an inner *cholo* identity, or vice-versa.

*Cholo* ethnicity also frequently cleaves in interesting places, aligning itself with urban national culture in some situations and breaking off and adhering to rural Campesino movements in others. Recently, Campesino and *cholo* groups united with many middle class voters in support of Evo Morales, now president of Bolivia, and his MAS (Movimiento al Socialismo) party during the election campaigns of late 2005. This large support coalition fractured after he was elected, with some groups pledging continued support and others divorcing themselves from Morales's platform and MAS

itself due to perceived injustices and abandonment of professed party ideals. This case is an example of the political ramifications of the frequent (re)alliances of *cholo* identity.

In Bolivia, outsiders' perceptions are also instrumental in the creation of *cholo* identity. The national *criollo* elite - the de facto rulers of the cities - have traditionally viewed migrants and all those with lower socio-economic status or darker skin as dirty, diseased, uncivilized and uncivilizable. Marcia Stephenson writes, "The upper class perceived native peoples to be disease-ridden pathological bodies boiling over their boundaries as contagion."<sup>13</sup> Likewise, rural Campesinos often deride friends or relatives who migrate to the cities for deserting what they see as crucial aspects of their Indian cultural heritage in favor of more urban, Western customs.<sup>14</sup> Migrants, then, often cease to be Indios or *criollos* after becoming urban residents, though not necessarily of their own volition. Migration often throws migrants into a kind of cultural vacuum, from which they contest these boundaries. Through the boundary negotiations, *cholos* create their own hybrid identity.

*Cholos'* geographic, linguistic, social, economic, and gender mobilities all characterize this cultural space. Migrants are of course geographically mobile on several levels, beginning from the act of moving from the countryside to the city. This rural-urban migration is more complex than a single instance of someone moving permanently to the city, never to return to the countryside again. In Bolivia, migrants often maintain small farms or animal herds in the countryside while living in the city. Their life is

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<sup>13</sup> Marcia Stephenson, *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*, 142.

<sup>14</sup> Lesley Gill's interview with Hilaria Calderon, a Cholita, illustrates this phenomenon: as soon as Hilaria changed her polleras and mantas for western-style skirts and sweaters, her family and friends saw her immediately as trying to leave her social class and become white. Lesley Gill, *Precarious Dependencies: Gender, Class, and Domestic Service in Bolivia* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 108.



frequently characterized by constant travel back and forth between city and countryside or suburbs to bring products to market and to take city goods back to rural areas.<sup>15</sup> Many males find work in the cities as *transportistas* (taxi, bus, and truck drivers) who travel daily between suburbs and rural areas surrounding Cochabamba to the dense, central urban downtown areas.<sup>16</sup> *Cholitas*, the ubiquitous migrant women of urban markets and domestic service throughout Andean Bolivia, travel back and forth, both between their homes in poor suburbs and their places of employment, and rural areas from which they originated.

Linguistic mobility complements migrants' geographic mobility. Most of them speak both Spanish and Quechua or Aymara, or often all three.<sup>17</sup> They easily switch between Spanish and Quechua, and do so strategically depending on social situations. A migrant might speak Spanish when applying for a job downtown, for example, in an attempt to downplay his indigenous heritage. The same person might revert back to speaking only in Quechua when returning to his or her hometown in the countryside in order to de-emphasize their urbanity. As such, migrants are linguistically mobile, able to move through and participate in various spheres of everyday life.

Migrant women also benefit from social, economic, and gender mobilities that middle and upper class Bolivian women are traditionally denied. Migrant women

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<sup>15</sup> It should be noted that suburbs in Bolivia are not always the elite enclaves they are in the United States. While such gated and guarded communities do exist in Bolivia, they are eclipsed by the swelling suburbs of migrants that often surround parts of the city.

<sup>16</sup> During my stays in Cochabamba, it was a frequent occurrence to enter a taxi (all taxis have semi-fixed fares) and find that the driver had no idea at all where he was going. This was usually because he had just arrived in the city, and was trying to establish himself as a *taxista* (taxi driver). These drivers were generally apologetic and grateful for passengers' help in locating addresses. Unfortunately, many Bolivian passengers I rode with in such situations reacted in anger at the drivers' lack of knowledge of local streets, insulting them quietly as "dumb Cholo" or "stupid Indio" behind their backs, often intimating that these Campesinos should go back to the countryside where they belonged.

<sup>17</sup> Most migrants in Cochabamba speak Quechua, the main indigenous language of the surrounding area, rather than Aymara, typical of the western highlands.

involved in domestic service and the markets earn their own money, however meager it may be, and have some spending power as a result of this discretionary income. This allows them to buy the often expensive physical adornments typical of *cholitas* – including *polleras*, intricately embroidered blouses, ornate *mantas* (shawls), and conspicuous gold jewelry.<sup>18</sup> Socially, a migrant woman can conceivably rise in social status simply by exchanging her *cholita* garb for western-style clothing.<sup>19</sup> Having some discretionary income and some social mobility allows migrant women to move in and out of *cholita*-ness with an ease of movement not always afforded to white, middle-upper class Bolivian women.<sup>20</sup> From these constant states of motion and countless others, migrants, especially the women, actively and continually (re-)create *cholo* identities.

In short, the in-between space of *cholo* identity is characterized not only by specific cultural elements, but also by the ways in which such elements are used in identity construction. The vagueness, fluidity, change, adaptation, and constant motion that occurs in this in-between, all give *cholo* identity meaning. *Cholo*-ness then is not merely a reflection of the *cholo* ethnic group itself. *Cholos* create *cholo*-ness through cultural performances. These performances strike a delicate balance between Indian and *criollo*, ultimately creating an in-between, hybrid identity.

Migrants take advantage of the cultural space they encounter when arriving in the cities and use it to enact constantly shifting but ever-present boundaries between them and other groups. Both urban cultures and rural, traditional cultures exert significant pressures on urban migrants, forcing them to renegotiate the boundaries the boundaries of

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<sup>18</sup> Increasingly popular in Cochabamba is the inlaying of gold around teeth, complementing the expensive and intricate jewelry *cholitas* often wear. See Gill, *Precarious Dependencies*, 105.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 107-108.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 97.

their identities. Migrants also apply internal pressures against what are perceived as threatening or invading cultural forces, continually constructing new boundaries and strengthening existing ones. Through the engaging of these cultural boundaries, *cholos* literally perform their existence.

### *La música*

Music is a significant component of the in-between space from which migrants perform *cholo*-ness. Those who create, perform, and listen to *cholo* musics draw from both Indian and European-based musical practices in varying degrees. These folk music groups are generally made up of small string-based ensembles, usually charango, guitar, and *bajo* (acoustic bass guitar). Male and female singers participate in the performances, often together. Their high-pitched vocal timbre mirrors the instrumental emphasis on the strident, penetrating timbre of the Charango and the higher octaves of the guitar. Most songs are relatively short (between four and seven minutes) and usually consist of the repetition of musical stanzas of varying lengths, each one sung to a new text and separated by *zapateados*, danced interludes with no voices. The *wayño* is one of the most popular *ritmos* used in this music,<sup>21</sup> which is most often performed in small bars or dancehalls in and around urban centers throughout Andean Bolivia. In performances of this music, differences between audience and performers are not always clearly delineated. Audience members frequently end up on stage dancing and singing along,

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<sup>21</sup> The term *ritmo* literally means rhythm in Spanish, but in the context of Bolivian and other Latin American folk music, it carries a more complex set of meanings. It refers to a set of characteristics including a specific rhythm, character, harmonic and formal structure, and performance style, among others. In Bolivia, the *ritmo* of each song commonly follows the song title on cassette, CD, or DVD labels, and is also used as commercially as a marketing tool. Performers often announce the *ritmo* of a particular song at concerts and performances before playing it. There are a host of *ritmos* in Bolivian folk music, some more popular and well-known to the general public than others.

and instrumentalists or singers often descend to the audience to take a drink of *chicha* (the alcoholic drink popular in Andean Bolivia, especially in rural areas and among migrants) or dance with someone.

Exhibiting the cultural mobility characteristic of the in-between, this folk music borrows heavily from both *criollo* and Indian musical traditions. Urban *música folklórica*, the polished, urban folk music favored by Andean Bolivia's middle and upper classes, is associated with *criollo*-ness. *Música autóctona*, a more rural, indigenous, community-based music, is associated with Indianness. For example, the uses of stringed instruments of Iberian origin, the small group size, and the use of diatonic harmonic systems all align *cholo* folk music with the *criollo* *música folklórica* tradition.

This music also retains elements of Indian musical practices, often found in *música autóctona*. One of the most salient of these elements is the embrace of a thicker, more filled-in sound. Turino explains this phenomenon as it occurs in performances of *música autóctona* in Southern Peru, which is very similar to that of Andean Bolivia. In these cases, music that is completely “in-tune” and “together” in the Western sense is heard as dry and sterile. Performers prefer their music’s wide variety of pitch that western ears often perceive as out of tune or sloppy, but that they hear as richer, thicker, and more alive.<sup>22</sup> *Cholo* folk music further aligns itself with *música autóctona* through emphasis on musical community, devaluation of virtuoso performance, use of irregular phrase lengths and phrase groupings, use of high-pitched vocal and instrumental timbre, and performance of songs based on traditionally Indian *ritmos*, especially the *wayño*.

When musically creating their hybrid identity, migrants also incorporate musical

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<sup>22</sup> Thomas Turino, "The Coherence of Social Style and Musical Creation among the Aymara in Southern Peru," *Ethnomusicology* 33: 1 (1989): 1-30.

customs that are avoided in *criollo* and Indian musical traditions. For example, *cholitas* often take part in musical performances, either as backup singers or as individual instrumentalists or singers. This is neither typical of *música folklórica* nor *música autóctona*, where women do not traditionally participate as soloists or prominent members.<sup>23</sup> Also, *cholo* perform their music in bars and dancehalls, not at large folkloric festivals or concert halls like *música folklórica*, or in rural, outdoor, community settings like *música autóctona*. The subject matter of their music is often racy and bawdy, unlike the nature-based utopian or romantic texts common in *música folklórica* and the infrequent religious-based texts of *música autóctona*.<sup>24</sup> While *música folklórica* texts are mostly or completely in Spanish, with occasional Quechua or Aymara phrases or verses, and *música autóctona* texts, when sung at all, are in native languages (Quechua or Aymara), *cholos* sing in a fairly equal mixture of Spanish and Aymara or, more frequently, Spanish and Quechua.

This music has not been given serious consideration in previous scholarship, in part because it is a relatively new phenomenon, but also due to the difficulty in assessing *cholo* identity and to the preference given in the literature to “pure” ethnicities and musical traditions. Whichever external features this music has borrowed from other current traditions, these are not simply influences that have been combined to create a

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<sup>23</sup> Although all-female *música folklórica* groups do exist, like Pukaj Wayra for example, they tend to be viewed by and presented to audiences as novelties rather than as genuine purveyors of *música folklórica* musical and cultural traditions. While females are making inroads in these genres, gender-integrated *música folklórica* and *música autóctona* groups are still rare; these are mostly male-dominated fields.

<sup>24</sup> For example, out of all songs recorded by the most famous of all Bolivian *música folklórica* groups, Los Kjarkas, through 1992, 8.8% have vague themes of social protest, 21.5% deal with elements of a mythic, utopian, and imagined Inca past, and 65.7% with romantic love (Marcelo Guardia Crespo, *Música Popular y Comunicación en Bolivia: Las Interpretaciones y Conflictos*, (Cochabamba: Universidad Católica Boliviana, 1994), 133. This kind of romantic love, however, is different from the humorously indecent lust so common in Cholo song texts.

new musical product. I argue that out of this cultural in-between-ness, *cholos* carefully select and incorporate elements of Indio and *criollo* musical styles in order to create a mobile, strategic identity. Although it may be tempting to see this music as simply a subset of preexisting musical traditions due to the various similarities it has to both Indian and *criollo* musics, this view is erroneous. Although *cholo* music does borrow from both these traditions, it is clearly a new, hybrid creation which is more than simply the sum of its musical parts. Similarly, previous scholarship emphasizes the factual description of Andean traditional musics from a perspective never quite devoid of essentialism (see following section). From this vantage point, *cholo* music simply makes no sense. It is not a static product of a culture, but one of the very means through which that culture is actively created.

### Literature Review

Despite the large body of scholarship that exists on Andean Bolivian folk music, studies of music performed by migrants in urban Bolivia are severely lacking. Concrete factual descriptions of traditional musics contribute to the basic understanding of those musics and the cultures which produce them, and are useful as starting points in this investigation. In Andean Bolivia, the widespread traditions of *música folklórica* and *música autóctona* are well-represented in the literature. The borrowing of traditional Indian melodies, *ritmos*, and styles of folk music has always been and continues to be an important source of material for urban *música folklórica* groups who go on to repackage them for national and international consumption. Gilka Wara Cespedes examines this folklorization process from a purely musical perspective, describing how the group Los

Jaires, recognized as the first group of its kind, pioneered it in the 1960s, and Bolivia's most popular ensemble, Los Kjarkas, have continued it up to the present.<sup>25</sup> However, Cespedes never quite examines the cultural implications of such a process, in which urban folkloric groups draw directly from Indian cultural traditions in order to lend their music authenticity and to (re)create themselves as Bolivians strengthened by an imagined Indian past.<sup>26</sup>

Any music has inherent cultural implications, and several authors have reported on such phenomena in Bolivian *música folklórica*. Michelle Bigenho's book-length study develops a more complex and complete understanding of such a relationship, and delves into the notion of authenticity (and the lack thereof) in some forms of *música folklórica*.<sup>27</sup> Bigenho examines the perceived authenticity of particular musical and extramusical elements of *música folklórica*, in which the influence of the indigenous is purportedly represented but often absent. Leichtman's ethnography of the Peña Naira explores *música folklórica*'s relationship to urban national culture, and even hints at the basic characteristics of *cholo* music, which she calls regional music.<sup>28</sup>

The relationships between *música autóctona* and the cultures to which it belongs are better and more comprehensively represented in scholarship. Most articles are well-blended studies that combine detailed technical descriptions of tuning systems, performance style, and compositional practices with cultural analyses. Max Peter Baumann's analysis of the harmonic and tuning systems of the Kantu ensembles among

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<sup>25</sup> Gilka Wara Cespedes, "'Huayño,' 'Saya,' and 'Chuntunqui': Bolivian Identity in the Music of 'Los Kjarkas,'" *Latin American Music Review* 14:1 (1993): 52-101.

<sup>26</sup> Interestingly, in their performance of Choloness, migrants subvert this folklorization process through their selective borrowing from *música folklórica* and *música autóctona*.

<sup>27</sup> Michelle Bigenho, *Sounding Indigenous: Authenticity in Bolivian Music Performance* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

<sup>28</sup> Ellen Leichtman, "Musical Interaction: A Bolivian Mestizo Perspective," *Latin American Music Review* 10:1 (1989): 29-52.

the Kallawayas in Andean Bolivia is one of the most definitive and complete investigations into the Bolivian panpipe tradition.<sup>29</sup> Thomas Turino discusses the cultural and social implications of such systems among the Aymara in the Southern Peruvian Andes.<sup>30</sup> This work establishes music not as merely a product of rural Aymara culture in the Southern Peruvian Andes, but as a contributor to that culture. Turino also studies the musical implications of rural-urban migration between Conima and Lima, Peru.<sup>31</sup> Henry Stobart examines the relationship between music and the agricultural cycle in a particular valley region of Northern Potosí, demonstrating the inextricable link between *música autóctona* and rural communities' calendars and cosmologies.<sup>32</sup>

Similar works linking music with social and cultural spaces also create a basis of knowledge important in the understanding of the relationships between rural Andean folk music and culture. Thomas Solomon examines the musical creation of social and cultural space in a group of several Campesino communities in rural Northern Potosí as well as in the improvisational nature of Quechua texts in the *Coplas de Todos Santos* among Quechua-speaking *campesinos* in Mizque.<sup>33</sup> In both of these works, Solomon examines how music is used in Campesino communities in the creation of social realities.

Although studies linking *cholos* with the music they perform in the cities are lacking, *cholo* ethnicity and identity themselves are well-represented in current

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<sup>29</sup> Max Peter Baumann, "The Kantu Ensemble of the Kallawayas at Charazani (Bolivia)," *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 17 (1985): 146-166.

<sup>30</sup> Thomas Turino, "The Coherence of Social Style and Musical Creation among the Aymara in Southern Peru," *Ethnomusicology* 33:1 (1989): 1-30.

<sup>31</sup> Thomas Turino, *Moving Away From Silence: Music of the Peruvian Altiplano and the Experience of Urban Migration* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).

<sup>32</sup> Henry Stobart, "Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers: Music and Potatoes in Highland Bolivia," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 3 (1994): 35-48.

<sup>33</sup> Thomas Solomon, "Dueling Landscapes: Singing Places and Identities in Highland Bolivia," *Ethnomusicology* 44:2 (2000): 257-280, and "Coplas de Todos Santos in Cochabamba: Language, Music, and Performance in Bolivian Quechua Song Dueling," *The Journal of American Folklore* 107:425 (1994): 378-414.



scholarship. Leslie Gill and Marcia Stephenson examine similar cultural boundaries by studying how *cholos* create and reinforce boundaries between themselves as an ethnic group and *criollo* culture. They analyze the roles of hygiene and apparel in boundary maintenance. Javier Sanjinés discusses *cholo* participation in national culture, subalternity in Bolivia, and historical aspects and social perceptions of *cholos* and Mestizos in Bolivia.<sup>34</sup> Marisol de la Cadena explores corollaries of *cholo* and Mestizo histories in Peru. Daniel Goldstein discusses life on the urban Bolivian periphery, centering his study in the largely *cholo*-populated communities that surround Cochabamba to the southeast.<sup>35</sup> Here, conceptual boundaries are associated with physical boundaries between *cholo* settlements and the city they surround, as a metaphor for the cultural frontiers between both groups.

### Evidence and Methods

My investigation is based on research I carried on in Cochabamba, Bolivia and surrounding areas in the summers of 2003 and 2004 and between August of 2005 and June of 2006. I analyze a large body of commercial audio and video recordings as well as the audio and video recordings I made of concerts, festivals, and interviews. I combine them with existing literature in order to understand and map out the boundaries that *cholos* and others enact the creation of their ethnicity, and the ways in which the *cholo* ethnic group performs its identity, specifically through musical practices.

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<sup>34</sup> Javier Sanjinés, *Mestizaje upside-down: Aesthetic Politics in Modern Bolivia* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2004).

<sup>35</sup> Daniel Goldstein, *The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

In order to circumvent the problems associated with studying the imaginary underpinnings of the *cholo* ethnic group, I take a multifaceted approach in my investigation. This includes both musical and technical analyses of migrant music as well as cultural analyses of migrants and the hybridity of created *cholo* identity, all from varying perspectives. Since *cholo* identity is created in certain situations and through certain actions, I examine in detail the loci for musical performances of identity, including both live and prerecorded performances.

This thesis examines the issue of music and *cholo* identity creation from varying perspectives. Chapter 2 brings up a general perspective with investigating migrants and *cholos* in and around the city of Cochabamba, Bolivia. This includes detailed investigations on rural-urban migration in Cochabamba, examinations of migrants' varied mobilities, and analyses of how migrants exploit elements of the in-between to construct *cholo* identities. By the end of the first chapter, the reader will have a comprehensive understanding of *cholo*-ness in Cochabamba.

Chapter 3's perspective is more complex in its direct and thorough analysis of *cholo* folk music and how migrants begin from an in-between space to create *cholo*-ness musically. It begins by discussing general characteristics of the music, using transcription and analysis to highlight salient musical elements. Since *cholo* hybridity draws heavily from *criollo* and Indian musical traditions, I examine each characteristic in detail and compare them, where applicable, to similar usages in *criollo* and Indian musical styles. By the end of Chapter 3, readers will be familiar with the characteristics of this music as well as elements of tradition and hybridity that permeate it.

Chapter 4 consists of a detailed study of one particular musical event: a concert at Los Molles, a dancehall in Quillacollo, Bolivia (a suburb of Cochabamba) featuring several *cholo* musical groups and performers. This chapter includes analyses of performance practices, audience behavior, and audience participation. It will show not only how *cholo* identity was created during this particular event, but also how *cholo* perform their identity in general during similar events. Through this three-pronged analysis of *cholo*-ness in Cochabamba, *cholo* music, and performance analyses which reveal musical creation of *cholo*-ness, I hope to bring *cholo* music and ethnicity forward from behind the shadows of selective scholarship and public dismissal.

## CHAPTER 2

### *CHOLO* IN-BETWEEN-NESS

Cochabamba is located in a large, elongated, bowl-shaped valley in the eastern Andes (see Fig. 2.1). Except for periods during the rainy season (December through February), small dust storms can be seen aggravating various parts of the valley, often several at a time. While the Northern and Western upper reaches of the valley are somewhat exempt, the southern and especially southeastern ends of the valley are hot and dusty for most of the year. Dust storms can be seen approaching from miles away, sweeping over the dry, scrub-covered hills that gradually flatten out to form the valley floor. Not coincidentally, many of the poor, migrant settlements of Cochabamba surround and climb up these steep, dry hillsides (see Fig. 2.2).



Figure 2.1: Downtown Cochabamba.



Figure 2.2: Looking south from Cochabamba to the poor hillside settlements.

As one travels south from the city center, one notices cosmetic changes in the urban environment. Overloaded minibuses clog the roads, sidewalks and streets become more crowded with pedestrians, vendors hawking their wares, and tiny impromptu market stalls. The streets become dirtier, neighborhoods begin to look rougher, one sees more dogs foraging from trash bins, more trash on the streets, and more dust. The Cancha, south of the city center, is known as Bolivia's largest market. It occupies large swaths of city blocks, and is surrounded by Avenida Aroma and the old city center on the north, by the bus station and la Coronilla (a large, north-south elongated hill) on the West, and by the Laguna Alalay (an algae-choked lake) on the East. Cactus-covered hillsides rise up south of the Cancha, overflowing with one and two story adobe tin-roof shacks, surrounded by high walls. As one continues south, the hillsides become less crowded as migrants continue building their houses further and further out of the city.

The social makeup also changes during such a trip. The prevalence of western-style dress diminishes the further one goes south from the city center. In the Cancha, along with the mostly middle-class ladies who come to haggle for produce, one notices a proliferation of women in polleras, braids, and straw hats and men in heavy wool pants loading, unloading, and driving produce trucks. Going further south, the middle-class presence practically disappears as one plunges into a completely different society: that of the Cochabamba's urban migrants, or *cholos*.

Scholars have valiantly attempted to develop concrete definitions for Bolivia's social groups, and none has been more problematic than the *cholos*. In various studies *cholos* have been defined as "...persons of Indian origin who live among mestizo-*criollos* and have been partially integrated into the white Spanish-speaking culture,"<sup>36</sup> as urban Mestizos "whose cultural and ethnic ties associate [them] more closely with communal, indigenous practices than with western traditions and values,"<sup>37</sup> in Peru as rural people "moving into town from the ayllus to fill the vacancies [left by people migrating elsewhere],"<sup>38</sup> and *cholitas* as "indigenous or mestiza urban women."<sup>39</sup> Lesley Gill's insightful definition includes the vagueness and mobility of the *cholo* ethnic group:

"Cholo" is a much more complex category. It denotes individuals of mixed racial and cultural origins, who speak some Spanish and wear Western-style clothing. The category represents a vast social and cultural frontier between the racial divisions of "Indios" and "blancos" (whites); a classificatory schema that the descendants of the Spanish conquerors and other "whites" have struggled to maintain for hundreds of years. Because of its amorphous character, the boundaries that separate "Cholos" from "Indios" and "whites" are constantly contested.<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Javier Sanjinés C., *Mestizaje Upside-down*, 21-22.

<sup>37</sup> Marcia Stephenson, *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia*, 3.

<sup>38</sup> Thomas Turino, *Moving Away from Silence*, 26.

<sup>39</sup> Daniel Goldstein, *Spectacular City*, 59.

<sup>40</sup> Lesley Gill, *Precarious Dependencies*, 4.

Clearly, the nebulousness of the *cholo* ethnic group is central to its very definition.

The *cholo* category's mercurial undefineability actually characterizes *cholo*-ness. In most all definitions, *cholos* are seen as existing at somewhere between Indio and *criollo*, between the urban and the rural, between tradition and modernity, between Quechua (or Aymara in Western Bolivia) and Spanish, between colonizers and colonized. Although the extent to which *cholos* "belong" to one category or the other varies greatly, the singular most defining characteristic of *cholo*-ness is being in between.

This in-between-ness, characterized by a constant motion or mediation between social categories, is comprised of many levels, including, among others, geographic (moving between the rural and the urban), linguistic (moving between Spanish and Quechua), dress (moving between western and Indian dress and styles of self-presentation), socio-economic (moving between social and economic categories), and musical (moving between *criollo* and Indio musical styles). Ease of mobility, then, is characteristic of *cholos'* in-between-ness, and contributes to the core of *cholo* identity. This chapter analyzes *cholo* identity creation through these various mobilities and concludes with the ways in which they contributed to the identity of one particular informant, Celia Sutiri. Musical mobility is left for a more detailed analysis in Chapter 3.

### Mobility and In-between-ness: Geography Mobility

Geographical mobility informs the *cholo* way of being perhaps more than any other single element. This category functions on several layers, including rural-urban migration, continuous travel back and forth between city and countryside, and daily travel between suburbs and the city center. Cochabamba has a long history of migration



influxes. Around the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Cancha marked the confluence of city and countryside, where rural farmers brought fruits, vegetables, grains, and livestock to sell, and where city residents came to buy it.<sup>41</sup> It has remained, at least conceptually, a symbol of the linkage of rural with urban, of “the traditional” with “the modern.” Little by little, peasants began migrating from the countryside to areas around this zone, where they bought small storefronts and took up positions as intermediaries between the rural farmer producers and the urban *criollo* buyers. As buyers and sellers of food and other commercial goods, Indigenous urban women, or *cholitas*, made up a large portion of these migrants.<sup>42</sup> Today, the Cancha is still dominated by *cholitas*, who, like the market itself, have become a symbol of both Cochabamba and Andean Bolivia.

*Chicherias*, or bars serving *chicha*, an alcoholic drink made from maize, especially popular in the rural valley regions around Cochabamba, also embodied the rural countryside’s reach into the city, to the dismay of those in power. In the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century *Chicherias* were located throughout the city itself, and were patronized by a large cross-section of the population. The markets and *Chicherias* undermined the city’s modernity, and from a *criollo* perspective represented intolerable intrusions of the rural and the Indian into what was supposed to be a modern, progressive city.<sup>43</sup> As the city became more crowded, especially around the Cancha, epidemics began to break out. *criollos* saw the migrants themselves rather than the conditions in which they lived as the cause of these epidemics, and groups successfully lobbied to have *chicherias* removed from the city, thus “eliminating” the “contagion” within the city itself. Even today, one

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<sup>41</sup> Goldstein 59.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid., 59.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., 60.



sees Chicherias, signaled by a small white flag on a stick outside of a house or building, only on the urban periphery and in the countryside to the south of Cochabamba.

As more peasants migrated to the city in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, wealthier *criollo* and mestizo residents attempted various measures to keep them out of the city proper and as close to the countryside as possible. Following the Chaco War, large numbers of indigenous veterans began streaming into the city and its surrounding areas. In 1937 the Municipal Council of Cochabamba consulted Miguel Rodríguez, an Argentine architect, in an attempt to reconcile the rapidly expanding southern zones of the city with its wealthier central, northern, and western sectors. In reference to the southern areas, Rodríguez recommended that the city impose “better organization and better physical and moral hygiene on these miserable people [*desgraciados*], who are packed into dense and dirty housing, with no other example [of how to live] than degeneration and vice.”<sup>44</sup>

Unfortunately, as migration continued, Rodríguez’s attitude became a mantra of middle and upper-class residents, who today are quick to attribute virtually any societal problem associated with disease, traffic, congestion, pollution, high prices, noise, or crime to *cholos*. As Goldstein explains:

From the perspective of longtime resident cochabambinos, the people living in the old city center and its near-in suburbs, the migrant settlers of the periphery are a threat and an affront, intruders on Cochabamba’s urban landscape, thieves of public land and destroyers of urban rationality.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Humberto Solares Serrano, *Historia, espacio, y sociedad: Cochabamba 1550-1950: Formación, crisis y desarrollo de su proceso urbano* (Cochabamba: CIDRE, 1990): 360-61, Quoted in Daniel Goldstein, *The Spectacular City: Violence and Performance in Urban Bolivia* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 63.

<sup>45</sup> Goldstein 54-55.

*Cholo* migrants are seen as interlopers in the urban environment. For the *criollos* they are a “necessary evil”: while *cholos* are needed as laborers and domestic servants, *criollos* want them as far away and as contained as possible.

The continued relationships between *cholos* and the rural areas from which they originate comprise the second, more complex level of geographic mobility. Many who migrate to the city maintain extensive economic and familial ties to rural areas. Some migrants own land in the countryside which family members tend while the migrants work in the city. These migrants travel back and forth frequently, both to check on land and livestock in the countryside and to bring goods back with them to the city to sell in the markets. For example, Inés Sutiri, a maid in several middle and upper-class households in Cochabamba, regularly brings ornately woven clothes and blankets to Cochabamba from rural Northern Potosí, where family members weave them and tend their land.<sup>46</sup> While migrants working in the cities cannot always afford to return to the countryside frequently, they usually go back at least once a year, often during a community festival or harvest.<sup>47</sup> A constant exchange exists between *cholos* in the city and campesinos in the countryside. While they make their home in the cities, many *cholos* do not exist solely in the urban sphere. Their identity is characterized by a constant motion – in this case, geographic – between the urban and the rural.

The third level of geographic mobility involves *cholos* traveling constantly between the *criollo* -dominated central areas of the city and the suburbs and outskirts of the urban environment, where most make their homes. In the mornings and afternoons in Cochabamba – as well as other urban areas in Andean Bolivia – busses fill up quickly

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<sup>46</sup> Inés Sutiri, interview by author, July 23, 2003, Cochabamba, Bolivia, written.

<sup>47</sup> Lesley Gill, *Precarious Dependencies* 100-101.

with passengers and clog the streets as they enter the city from and return to the *cholo*-dominated outlying areas of the city. Many *cholitas* come enter the city daily to work either as domestic servants or as merchants in the Cancha or in other small stores. *Cholos* often work as bus, taxi, or truck drivers, or construction workers, or load and unload produce in the markets. A large number of *cholos* live outside of the city proper, and thus make daily trips into the central urban environment and back out again to areas considered more rural. This constant, smaller-scale travel in and out of the city echoes the larger-scale travel between city and countryside.

### Linguistic Mobility

Building upon this geographic mobility, *cholos* further negotiate their in-between-ness through linguistic mobility, shifting constantly between Spanish and Quechua as the situation calls for it, often foregoing one or the other completely. Three million of Bolivia's nine million people speak Quechua, the country's most widely spoken language after Spanish.<sup>48</sup>

While most *cholos* are fluent in Spanish and Quechua, the amount of Quechua a person speaks in any given situation is often directly proportional to the proximity of that person to the city. In Cochabamba, *cholos* speak more Spanish out of necessity; most domestic employees' bosses, for example, do not speak fluent Quechua.<sup>49</sup> In the Cancha, a more *cholo* domain, one hears Quechua more frequently, especially when vendors or truck drivers speak with each other. However, most still haggle with their customers in

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<sup>48</sup> Gordon, Raymond G., Jr. (ed.), 2005. *Ethnologue: Languages of the World, Fifteenth edition*. Dallas, Tex.: SIL International. Online version: <http://www.ethnologue.com/>. Cholos in Western Bolivia usually speak Aymara, Bolivia's second most-common indigenous language.

<sup>49</sup> In fact, many forbid domestic servants to speak indigenous languages in their homes, in an attempt to maintain more of a boundary between what is seen as rural, backwards, and unhealthy.

Spanish. In smaller towns in the countryside, like Mizque or Aiquile, the presence of Quechua is much stronger - I heard just as much Quechua spoken there as I did Spanish. Finally, in tiny villages or rural farms, Spanish is often not spoken at all, both because residents prefer Quechua and also because some do not speak Spanish.

### Mobility Through Dress and Self-Presentation

Dress and physical adornment is another way in which *cholos* move between *criollo*-ness and Indian-ness. *Cholos*, especially females, perform in-between-ness through the combination of *criollo* and indigenous clothing, jewelry, and hairstyles. While male *cholos* often wear hats, heavy wool pants and wool or alpaca sweaters and sandals, there is no one “typical” male *cholo* dress. *Cholitas*, on the other hand, do often dress in a characteristic way, one that is easily recognizable and represents one of the few more concrete characteristics of *cholo*-ness in Andean Bolivia.

This typical *cholita* dress includes clothing and jewelry with roots in both Indigenous and Western culture. The *pollera* often worn by *cholitas* is seen in Bolivia as a symbol of the Bolivian Chola. These heavy, gathered, multilayered skirts are worn about knee-length by *cholitas* in the valley regions (including Cochabamba) where the climate is milder, and ankle-length in the colder Altiplano cities of La Paz, El Alto, and Oruro. *Cholitas* also often wear intricately embroidered shirts or vests, as well as richly colored and textured *mantas*, or shawls, jewelry, and shoes. *Cholitas* in the western cities of La Paz, El Alto, and Oruro also wear derby hats, while those in the valley regions wear flat-brimmed straw hats. *Cholitas* often use *aguayos*, hand or machine-woven multicolored blankets, to carry cargo or infants on their backs.

Certain elements of typical *cholita* dress have grown out of Western traditions and others from indigenous ones. The pollera, manta, shoes, jewelry, and derby hats were all appropriated from colonial Spanish women's fashion. In the sixteenth century, provincial Spanish women wore predecessors of the pollera, manta, hats, jewelry, and shoes, and by the eighteenth century indigenous urban women began adopting them in attempts to differentiate themselves from rural Indians.<sup>50</sup> Like the *aguayo*, braided hair is a symbol of Indianness in Bolivia. *Cholitas* typically braid their hair, which is one reason why middle and upper class women and girls avoid braiding theirs. Although there is not one standard male *cholo* dress, the use of hats may, like *cholitas'* derby or straw hats, seems to be related to Western clothing traditions.

Physical appearance based on clothes and jewelry is easily changed, and *cholos* exploit this to move between Western and Indian spheres. *Cholitas* sometimes change the way they present themselves physically by cutting their braids, forsaking jewelry, and adopting Western-style blouses and pants. This is known as [ir] *de vestido* ("to be dressed as a Westerner"). By changing their clothing style, *cholitas* are able to move through social categories, and often do so multiple times during their lives.<sup>51</sup> Women do this not only to avoid the expenses of keeping up such attire, which can cost hundreds of dollars, but also to avoid the strong social stigma against Indianness. Males can also avoid social stigma by wearing a suit, tie, and shoes instead of pants, sweater, and sandals, thus changing the way they are perceived by others. Although this stigma still exists, it has lessened over the past few years since Evo Morales became president of Bolivia in December of 2005. Under his regime, which champions indigenous rights, the

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<sup>50</sup> Lesley Gill, *Precarious Dependencies*, 104.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 106.

pollera seems to have gained back some of its prestige. The woven sweaters which Morales is known for wearing when meeting diplomats and other heads of state has become a sign of pride among indigenous Bolivians as well.

### Socio-economic Mobility

Although Bolivian society is structured to prevent the “rise” of Indians and *cholos* into “higher” social classes, *cholos* are able to permeate this boundary, to the constant dismay of the upper classes. This is accomplished in both economic and social spheres. *Cholitas* especially enjoy a limited amount of economic freedom that often eclipses that of Criolla women, who depend either partially or completely on their husbands for financial support.<sup>52</sup> Whereas it is common for Criolla women not to work outside the home, *cholitas*, whether single or married, overwhelmingly remain in the workforce. With the small salaries they earn, *cholitas* are able to buy articles of clothing or jewelry, and go out on free evenings to socialize, often in “*cholo*” bars or dancehalls. Through their work, single *cholitas* also have a kind of self-reliance that many Criolla women lack.

This limited economic freedom complements a social mobility in which Indians and *cholos* can transcend the prescribed social categories simply by changing their dress (see above), education, or life circumstances. For example, the same man was listed on official documents as belonging to three different racial categories. He was listed as “Indian” on his school registration because of his dress and appearance when he migrated from the countryside to La Paz. When he graduated from high school, his diploma listed

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<sup>52</sup> Ana María Condori, with Ineke Dibbits and Elizabeth Peredo, *Nayan Uñatatawi: Mi despertar* (La Paz: HISBOL; THOA, 1988): 88-89.

him as mestizo, not because his skin color or physical characteristics had magically changed, but because he had improved his situation socially by completing his high school education. When this man received his college degree in engineering, he was listed on official documents as being white race. In this way, in Bolivia, simple changes in dress or social situation can completely change how a person is perceived.<sup>53</sup> Although attempts to better one's situation are possible, they are frequently met with outrage and indignation, as they challenge *criollos'* supremacy at the top of the social hierarchy. Quite simply, *criollos* want *cholos* and Indios to know their place at the bottom of the social order.

### Celia's Story

Individual histories reveal the constant mediation between two seemingly opposite realities, an aggregate of the multitude of ways in which *cholos* move in-between. Celia Sutiri was a sixteen-year-old maid in several middle and upper-class households in Cochabamba who I became friends with over the course of a year. Through interviews and conversations with her, I began to see how these mobilities were a central part of her life.<sup>54</sup> Celia originally came to Cochabamba with her sister in 2004 from Llallagua, the town in Northern Potosí where she was born. She left behind her younger brother, her mother, and her grandmother, who tend their family's plot of land and sheep, and to whom she brings some of her earnings. While she sometimes stayed in a servant's room in the houses she worked in, she also frequently traveled to and from her

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<sup>53</sup> Elsa Paredes de Salazar, *Presencia de nuestro pueblo* (La Paz: Universo, 1976) 31, quoted in Marcia Stephenson, *Gender and Modernity in Andean Bolivia* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999) 111.

<sup>54</sup> Celia Sutiri, interview by author, October 27, 2005 and January 23, 2006, Cochabamba, Bolivia, written.

aunt's house in Sacaba, a suburb northeast of Cochabamba. When she is allowed time off to travel (usually no more than once or twice a year), she goes back to Llallagua for a few days, bringing some of the money she has earned since she last visited.

Celia is fluent in Quechua and Spanish, but speaks only Spanish in the houses in which she works. At her Aunt's house in Sacaba, she speaks mostly Quechua, and completely in Quechua at her home in Llallagua.<sup>55</sup> When I knew her in Bolivia, Celia wore a *pollera* and embroidered shirt and braided her hair every day. She has since cut her long braids and decided to go *de vestido*, and now wears her hair non-braided at chin-length along with Western-style jeans, skirts, and blouses.

Since she lives in the house where she works and does not have to pay room or board, Celia is able to save some of her meager salary. She brings some of it home to her mother and grandmother in Llallagua when she travels there, and uses some to buy shirts, mantas, or jewelry or to go out with other young *cholitas*, often to small *cholo* bars or restaurants. Celia left school in Llallagua after completing fifth grade, and has begun taking classes at night in Cochabamba in order to finish high school. She said she wanted to eventually own a store or run a maid agency, and did not want to be a servant her entire life.

Celia, like many other young *cholos* and *cholitas*, practices a constant, even vigilant, mobility between Indianness and *criollo*-ness. Through this careful boundary maintenance, they create an in-between social space, where they shape their identity as *cholos*. Never completely Indian nor completely *criollo*, *cholos* build their identity from key fragments of both cultures, constantly (re)inventing *cholo*-ness through these hybrid

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<sup>55</sup> Celia's grandmother lives with her mother and tends the family's small farm in rural Northern Potosí. She does not know Spanish, and the family speaks entirely in Quechua in the home.



cultural constructions. The following chapter deals exclusively with the ways in which *cholos* use music to construct their identity.

## CHAPTER 3

### MUSICAL CREATION OF *CHOLO* IDENTITY

*Cholos* establish and maintain the in-between-ness of their identity through the careful combination of musical and extramusical elements rooted in both Indian and *criollo* cultural traditions. While *cholo* identity is actively created through variety of mediated cultural performances (see Chapter 2), the music made by migrants is one of the most complex ways in which *cholos* create their identity. This music combines a multitude of elements from a variety of musical traditions, the most prominent of which include urban música folklórica and rural música autóctona. To suggest that the music simply reflects *cholo* culture is too simple. Through this motion toward and away from *criollo* and Indian musical styles, *cholos* create their musical identity and create their identity musically.

I have divided the characteristics of this music into musical and extramusical categories, and further into large and small-scale categories. I analyze each element in detail technically and then in terms of its origins. I begin by examining the smaller-scale musical characteristics of this folk music, which include group size, instrumentation, intonation, register, timbre, and charango strumming style. Following the small-scale musical characteristics, the large-scale characteristics include key areas, harmonic progression, *ritmo*/form, phrase groupings, meter, tempo, and dynamics. Next, smaller-scale extramusical characteristics include language, text subjects, dialogue between performers and performers and audience, virtuosity, and song origins. Finally, larger-

scale characteristics include the role of dance in the music, dress, female participation, audience behavior, and performance venue.

### Small-scale Musical Elements

Two of the most readily apparent characteristics of this music are group size and instrumentation, both of which draw from both Indian and *criollo* musical traditions. *cholo* performances are usually made up of a combination of some or all of the following: vocals, charango, guitar, bajo (acoustic bass guitar) and if the principal vocalist is male, an additional *cholita* vocalist. The principal vocalist is usually, but not always, also the charango player. Therefore, a performance of *cholo* music might comprise one person playing charango and singing, or a vocalist/charango player and guitarist, or a vocalist/charango player, guitarist, bassist, and *cholita* singer. Rarely do these groups exceed four members. On recordings, it is common for one musician to play several of the instruments; for example, on the recording *Agustina Barahona y el Roba Corazones*, Alberto Aguilar sings and plays charango, guitar, and bass, while Agustina Barahona sings.<sup>56</sup> These *cholo* music groups are smaller than the standard *música folklórica* or *música autóctona* groups, which often have 4-8 members or up to 20-30 members, respectively.

The origins of the instruments used in performance of this music vary. The guitar and acoustic bass guitar have roots in Iberian musical traditions. The charango itself is an instrument of hybrid origins – a fitting choice for *cholo* music due to its “in-between” or hybrid origins. The charango as it is used in *cholo* music is a small treble lute with five

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<sup>56</sup> Agustina Barahona and Alberto Aguilar, *Agustina Barahona y El Roba Corazones* (Cochabamba: Nogales Producciones, N/D), Cassette.

sets of double-coursed strings. This instrument grew out of contact between European and indigenous cultures; one of the few hybrid instruments to have grown out of this contact.<sup>57</sup> However, for practically the first three hundred years after its inception, the Charango was known as an Indian instrument:

Etimológicamente deriva de dos voces americanas: charanga, palabra muy utilizada durante la colonia que servía para nombrar a la música de instrumentos metálicos y de madera; y de charanguero que quiere decir tosco, grosero, chapucero, chambón, imperfecto. Tomó este nombre por ser considerado un instrumento bullicioso, estrepitoso...dominante y por su condición de instrumento rústico y barato que era más utilizado por los indígenas causando risa y menosprecio en las elites dominantes.<sup>58</sup>

Etymologically, [the term charango] derives from two American terms: *charanga*, a word commonly used during the colonial period that referred to the music of metallic and wood instruments; and from *charanguero*, which means course, rough, amateurish, unskilled, imperfect. It took on this name because it was considered a boisterous, ranking...domineering instrument, and for being a rustic, inexpensive instrument that was used by indigenous people which caused laughter and contempt among dominant elite.

Later, during the 1960s and 1970s, the middle and upper classes began to appropriate the charango, using it in groups to portray Indianness (la India) in their music, which gave rise to the modern-day genre of música folklórica.<sup>59</sup>

Interestingly, *cholo* music groups avoid the wind and percussion instruments of indigenous origin that function in both música folklórica and música autóctona as

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<sup>57</sup> Thomas Turino, "Charango," *Grove Music Online* ed. L. Macy (Accessed June 19, 2007), <<http://www.grovemusic.com>>

<sup>58</sup> Ernesto Cavour Aramayo, *Diccionario enciclopédico de los instrumentos musicales de Bolivia* (La Paz: Poluciones CIMA, 2003), 37.

<sup>59</sup> For a detailed description of this process, see Gilka Wara Cespedes, "'Huayño,' 'Saya,' and 'Chuntunqui': Bolivian Identity in the Music of 'Los Kjarkas,'" *Latin American Music Review* 14:1 (1993): 52-101. Ironically, the charango has now taken a place as one of the national instruments of Bolivia, so much so that in the annual Festival de Charango in Aiquile in 2005, "indigenous"-style charango playing was relegated to a single separate category.

markers of Indianness. Both of these traditions use a wide variety of wind instruments, the most common of which include the *siku* or *zampoña* (panpipes) and the *kena* (a notched, end-blown flute with up to seven finger holes.) Large groups playing on wind instruments, including *kantu* ensembles and *tarkeadas*, are typical of rural community-based música autóctona.<sup>60</sup> (Both of these are traditionally accompanied by percussion instruments). Música folklórica also uses wind and percussion instruments, but in a different manner. These groups use the *siku* and *kena* primarily as solo instruments, functioning much like violins or flutes would in a symphony orchestra. The groups usually have at most two *siku* players; in música folklórica it is also common to have one wind specialist, that is, one performer who plays a variety of indigenous wind instruments during the course of a concert or even a single song. He or she may play *siku* on one verse, *kena* on another, or *tarka* on another. These groups also usually have at least one percussion specialist who plays on a variety of percussion instruments. Instrumentally, then, *cholo* music borrows in some ways from the urban, European-based folk music traditions through its use of guitar and bajo, in others from indigenous musical traditions through its use of the charango, and omits other elements – wind and percussion instruments – used in both of these traditions.<sup>61</sup> Thus *cholo* groups create a kind of hybrid or in-between instrumentation; one which is not completely European, not completely Indian, but that uses both to create a new, distinctly “*cholo*” instrumentation.

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<sup>60</sup> Kantu ensembles are large groups of performers who play different sizes of sikus, usually accompanied by some sort of percussion. Tarkeadas are groups of performers who play tarkas, decorated wooden end-blown flutes.

<sup>61</sup> The instrumentation of Cholo groups resembles that of campesino groups from rural Quechua-speaking areas that provide some of the largest numbers of migrants to Cochabamba, including Northern Potosí and southern and southeastern Cochabamba department.

The intonation of charango-based *cholo* music groups recalls that of rural, indigenous folk music. In these rural musical traditions, aesthetics dictate a thick, full sound in which spaces in between intervals are often “filled in” by notes that would seem to Western ears to be out of tune.<sup>62</sup> Reminiscent of this rural style, *cholo* music’s vocals, charango, bass, and guitar are often not perfectly “in tune” with each other; an E played on the charango might be slightly different from an E played on the guitar or sung by the voice. This does not mean that the performers are not skilled and do not know how to sing or play in tune. This music’s aesthetics echo those of rural kantu ensembles or tarka groups, which dictate an approach that values completeness of sound rather than what we think of as exact intonation. This phenomenon as it applies to the instruments can be heard in “El campamento” by Los Tutapuris de Arque, in which the charango strings are not “in tune” with each other or the other instruments.<sup>63</sup> Likewise, in “Ay chiquito,” Alberto Aguilar’s and Flora Vasquez’s voices often glide between and shy away from pitches, in a sense filling up the tonal space with sound.<sup>64</sup>

In terms of pitch register, *cholo* music draws more from Indian musical traditions. *cholo* music exploits the higher ends of both vocal and instrumental pitch registers. Male and female singers both sing very high, the higher ranges of the guitar are often emphasized, and the range of the charango itself is high. This emphasis on high vocal and instrumental registers is typical of Indian music. *Cholitas’* high-pitched singing and speaking voices, combined with their ornate jewelry and clothing assert a kind of hyper-

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<sup>62</sup> See Thomas Turino, “The Coherence of Social Style and Musical Creation among the Aymara in Southern Peru,” *Ethnomusicology* 33: 1 (1989): 1-30.

<sup>63</sup> Los Tutapuris de Arque, “El campamento,” *Los Tutapuris de Arque*, Banana Records, (Cochabamba, Bolivia: Banana Records, N/D), cassette.

<sup>64</sup> Alberto Aguilar and Flora Vasquez, “Ay chiquito,” *Alberto Aguilar y Flora Vasquez*, Cochabamba, Bolivia: Banana Records, N/D), cassette.

femininity. Their use of high registers complements this assertion of femininity, and also resonates as an extension of Indian culture. Although the charango, guitar, and bass are also prevalent in *música folklórica*, this genre is known for a deeper, richer, and softer timbre. In *música folklórica* singers traditionally exploit lower vocal ranges, and often *música folklórica* groups sing in three- and four-part harmony.<sup>65</sup>

Partially as a consequence of *cholo* music's use of high instrumental and vocal registers, its timbre is piercing and strident. In this genre, charango players normally use metal strings instead of gut strings in order to produce a "tinnier" or "janglier" timbre. Since vocalists often sing at the top of their registers, the timbre of their voices is often quite strained and forceful. Both the high vocal range and strident timbre of typical of male singers in this genre can be heard in "Las mineros de Bolivia: el minero" by Alberto Arteaga (see Ex. 3.1 below). Flora Vasquez's speaking and singing at the beginning of "Ay chiquito" displays the high timbre typical of female vocals characteristics in relation to female singers.



Example 3.1: Alberto Arteaga's Vocal Range in "Las mineros de Bolivia"

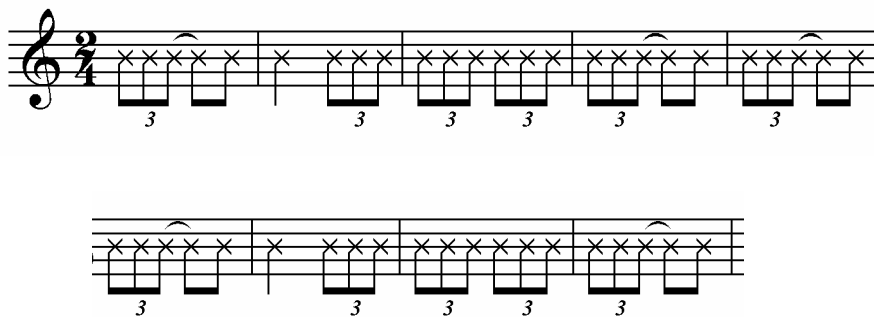
*Cholo* music's monophonic melodies relate much more to Indian musical styles than to *criollo* ones. Regardless of how many are singing or playing, Indian melodies are almost always monophonic. In terms of melody, *cholo* music grows out of this tradition. Even in the songs with two vocalists, singers alternate verses with each other instead of

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<sup>65</sup> The group Amaru, one of Bolivia's most popular *música folklórica* groups, is well-known for both its four part harmonies and its lead baritone, who sings with a deep, rich tone.

harmonizing each other's melody. In *criollo* música folklórica, melodies are much more often harmonized in a Western, European style.

Charango strumming style is an important index of a song's cultural and geographic origins, and in *cholo* music it reveals a close alliance with rural Indian musical styles. In this music, the charango most often accompanies the vocal lines with rhythmic chord changes. Sometimes a second charango part, which in recordings is often played by the same person, overlays the first; this part generally consists of parallel major and minor thirds that outline the harmonic pattern. Ex. 3.2 below shows a transcription of the basic strumming rhythm Alberto Aguilar uses in "Rayolero."



Example 3.2: General rhythm of the charango strumming in "Rayolero" by Alberto Aguilar and Miguelina Mendoza.

The charango strumming style for this music generally uses some kind of variation of the above example: alternating triplets and eighth notes, with the beginning triplets slightly rushed, creating a lag between the triplet and eighth notes. Virtuosity as an aesthetic is not as important in this music as it is in música folklórica, in which the charango often functions as a solo instrument and is used as a vehicle for the performer to demonstrate his or her technique. In música folklórica charango style, performers often arpeggiate chords on the charango, play rapid scalar passages, and punctuate phrases with elaborate chordal flourishes. The charango's function in *cholo* music is more rhythmic and static.



In terms of intonation, pitch register, timbre, and strumming style, then, *cholo* music maintains closer indexical functions with Indianness than with *criollo*-ness; the way each of these elements is treated echoes their treatment in rural musical traditions.

### Large-scale Musical Elements

*Cholo* music overwhelmingly uses the *wayño* ritmo,<sup>66</sup> which has been performed for hundreds of years and appears to be of Incan or pre-Incan origins.<sup>67</sup> *Wayños* are interpreted by different ensembles throughout the Andes; in Andean Bolivia, they make up an important part of almost folk music repertoire. Typical *wayños* have an instrumental section with *zapateo* – that is, foot stamping and/or clapping in a triplet or quarter-note/two eighth-note rhythm. In *cholo* music the term *zapateado* is often used interchangeably with *wayño*. While *música folklórica* groups perform *wayños* along with countless other national and international ritmos, *cholo* music groups play *wayños* and *zapateados* almost exclusively. In these generally strophic songs, each verse is separated by a repetition of the song's basic harmonic pattern without text – the *zapateado* sections. In performances, audience members and *cholitas* participating in the performance often dance and clap during the *zapateados*.

*Cholo* music uses harmonic progressions that, while not completely Indian, are neither completely *criollo*. Like Indian music, the songs generally remain in the same key throughout (and when they do modulate, never stray too far from the tonic). They do progress in a manner similar to *música folklórica* songs. Although songs do not

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<sup>66</sup> Like many Quechua words, *wayño* has many different spellings, to regional variants and lack of one consistent alphabet and phonetic system. While it sometimes appears as *huayno*, *huayño*, *huaynu*, *huayñu*, or *wayñu*, I will refer to it as *wayño*.

<sup>67</sup> Antonio Paredes Candia, *La danza folklórica en Bolivia* (La Paz: Librería Editorial Popular, 1991) 74-75.

necessarily begin on the tonic, they eventually arrive at it, and the tonic resolution is the ultimate goal of each phrase. Cadences at the end of phrases are often delayed by a measure or two. This kind of tag phrase ending comprised of a delayed cadence ending is common in folk music in the Andes, especially Bolivia. Two general types of harmonic progressions dominate *cholo* music. In the first, a song begins in a major key and aside from some subdominant and dominant chords, remains in the tonic for most of the piece. The endings of each period, however, usually modulate and cadence on a minor vi chord, briefly prepared for by a minor iii chord. This harmonic progression, the basics of which can be heard in many *cholo* songs, is shown in Ex. 3.3 below.

1 I	2 I	3 I	4 I	5 IV	6 IV	7 I						
1 I	2 I	3 I	4 I	5 I	6 I	7 III	8 vi	9 vi				
1 IV	2 IV	3 I	4 I	5 I	6 I	1 IV		2 IV	3 I	4 I	5 I	6 I
1 I	2 I	3 I	4 I	5 I	6 III	7 vi	8 vi					

Example 3.3: Outline of the harmonic progression of “Los Mineros” by Alberto Arteaga. Arabic numerals represent measures and Roman numerals represent chords. For the sake of brevity, I have omitted the repetition of the seven and nine bar phrases and the six, six, and eight bar phrases.

In the second type of harmonic progression common in *cholo* music, the song begins and remains in a major key. Phrases in these songs usually do not begin in the tonic. Each phrase typically starts on a subdominant or dominant chord and reaches the tonic by the end of the first or second phrase. Periods end not on minor vi chords, but on the tonic. However, like the first harmonic progression (discussed above), the songs have the “extra” measure at the end of each period. Interestingly, in both of these two main

harmonic progressions, the voice almost always ends the phrase by singing the third of the cadential chord. This type of harmonic progression is exemplified by “Rayolero” by Alberto Aguilar and Miguelina Mendoza, diagrammed in Ex. 3.4 below.

1 IV	2 IV	3 V	4 V		1 vi	2 IV	3 V	4 I	5 I	
1 V	2 IV	3 V	4 V		1 vi	2 IV	3 V	4 I	5 I	
1 IV	2 V	3 V		1 IV	2 V	3 V				
1 V	2 IV	3 IV	4 V	5 I		1 V	2 IV	3 V	4 I	5 I

Example 3.4: Diagram of the harmonic progression of “Rayolero” by Alberto Aguilar and Miguelina Mendoza. Again, Arabic numerals represent bars, and Roman numerals, chords.

Like harmonic progression in *cholo* music, the relationship between the bass and the harmony is unique. While it does resemble that of música folklórica and other Western-based music, in which the bass plays the roots of the chords played by other instruments, it has important differences. In *cholo* music, although the bass tends to follow outlines of the harmonic progression, it sometimes either remains static while the harmony changes, or changes when the harmony does not. This indicates that the bass functions differently than it does in Western musics including música folklórica. The bass serves to highlight the general harmonic progression while retaining more freedom to play “around” keys rather than playing the root of each chord. Ex. 3.5 below shows the harmonic progression and bass line of “Rayolero.”

The musical score is written in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 2/4 time signature. It consists of five systems of music, each with a line of notes and a corresponding line of Roman numeral harmonies. The notes are mostly quarter and eighth notes, with some rests. The harmonies are written below the notes.

System 1 (measures 1-10):  
 Notes: G2, A2, B2, C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3  
 Harmonies: IV, IV, V, V, vi, IV, V, I, I, V

System 2 (measures 11-21):  
 Notes: C3, D3, E3, F#3, G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4  
 Harmonies: IV, V, V, vi, IV, V, I, I, IV, V, V

System 3 (measures 22-32):  
 Notes: G3, A3, B3, C4, D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5  
 Harmonies: IV, V, V, V, IV, IV, V, I, V, IV, V

System 4 (measures 33-43):  
 Notes: D4, E4, F#4, G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5  
 Harmonies: I, I, IV, V, V, IV, V, V, V, IV, IV

System 5 (measures 44-50):  
 Notes: G4, A4, B4, C5, D5, E5, F#5, G5, A5, B5, C6  
 Harmonies: V, I, V, IV, V, I, I

Example 3.5: Bass line of “Rayolero” by Alberto Aguilar and Miguelina Mendoza. The Roman numerals indicate the harmony as dictated by the charango and guitar parts. The recording actually sounds in G-flat major.

If this type of incongruity between the bass and the harmony occurred only occasionally, one might be tempted to question the skill of the performer in following the harmony.

However, this occurs very frequently in *cholo* music. Often in recordings the same performer plays the guitar, charango, and bass parts. Obviously the performer would have clear knowledge of the harmonic progression as dictated by the guitar and charango. In música folklórica the bass functions as it does in much of Western music, and música autóctona and other rural musics do not usually have a bass part at all. This bass-harmony relationship is unique to *cholo* music, and indicates a musical characteristic that is in between Indian and *criollo*.

As in música autóctona, *cholo* songs are divided into periods of unusual lengths. A period made up of a 7-bar phrase followed by an 11-bar phrase, for example, might be

the formal “germ” of an entire song, repeating over and over. “Los Mineros” and “Rayolero,” both discussed above, have this type of irregular phrase groupings (see Ex. 3.6 and 3.7 below).

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & \mathbf{7} & & + & & \mathbf{9} & \\ 4 & + & 3 & & & 4 & + & 5 \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ccccccc} \mathbf{6} & + & & \mathbf{6} & & + & & \mathbf{8} \\ & & & & & & 5 & + & 3 \end{array}$$

Example 3.6: Period structure of “Los Mineros” by Alberto Arteaga. The larger numbers in boldface type indicate the periods, and the smaller numbers below the sub-periods that make up the periods.

$$\begin{array}{ccccccc} & \mathbf{9} & & + & & \mathbf{9} & \\ 4 & + & 5 & & & 4 & + & 5 \end{array} \qquad \begin{array}{ccccccc} & \mathbf{6} & & + & & \mathbf{10} & \\ 3 & + & 3 & & & 5 & + & 5 \end{array}$$

Example 3.7: Period structure of “Rayolero” by Alberto Aguilar and Miguelina Mendoza. The larger numbers in boldface type indicate the periods, and the smaller numbers below the sub-periods that make up the periods.

In “Los Mineros,” the first period consists of a seven-bar phrase and a nine-bar phrase, each one made up of subgroups of four and three-bars and four and five-bars, respectively. This period is repeated, and then followed by a period made up of two six-bar phrases and an eight-bar phrase (with a subgroup of three and five-bar phrases), also played twice. The first period in “Rayolero” consists of two sets of four and five-measure phrases. This period is repeated, and followed by two three-measure phrases and two five-measure phrases, all of which are also repeated.

Such unusual combinations of phrases make periods in *cholo* music irregular. This type of formal construction comes from música autóctona and indicates a direct relationship to more Indian musical styled; in the kantu ensembles discussed in articles by Turino and Baumann we see similar groupings of irregular phrases.<sup>68</sup> Música

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<sup>68</sup> Thomas Turino, “The Coherence of Social Style and Musical Creation among the Aymara in Southern Peru” *Ethnomusicology* 33: 1 (1989): 1-30 and Max Peter Baumann, “The Kantu Ensemble of the Kallawaya at Charazani (Bolivia),” *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 17 (1985): 146-166.

folklórica, although not completely devoid of irregularities in phrase and period length, adheres much more strictly to regular and consistent phrase and period lengths.

*Cholo* songs' meter, tempo, and dynamics usually remain constant throughout each song. A majority of these songs are in duple meter, which is not surprising since the wayño and zapateado ritmos, which dominate this music, are both in duple meter. Most songs take either slow or moderate tempi, avoiding rapid, virtuosic tempi and tempo changes. Dynamic levels, which change more frequently in Western classical music and música folklórica, are also fairly static in this music.

#### Small-scale Extramusical Elements

The use of language in *cholo* folk music is one of the ways in which *cholos* assert in-between-ness. Performers sing in a fairly even mixture of Quechua and Spanish. While verses may alternate between Spanish and Quechua, each verse usually remains in one of these two languages, while the following one may change to the other. Sometimes all verses but one are sung in Quechua or Spanish, and sometimes a song is sung entirely in one language or the other. Unlike música folklórica, which does sometimes incorporate some Aymara or Quechua here and there, *cholo* music achieves much more of a balance between the two languages. The constant mediation between Quechua and Spanish in *cholo* music reveals a simultaneous movement toward and away from both Indian and *criollo* cultures. The balance achieved by this mobility, which is characteristic of *cholo*-ness, contributes to the creation of *cholo* identity as a hybrid or in-between of Western and indigenous cultures.

Textually, *cholo* music is neither Indian nor *criollo*. Love, sex, and drinking - not necessarily in that order - make up most of the subjects of *cholo* song texts. Because it has maintained associations with love and seduction,<sup>69</sup> the charango is a perfect complement to song texts depicting similar subjects. These subjects are treated very frankly and bawdily in the song texts. The many odes to inebriation frequently call for more beer (like “Mas Cerveza”) or sing of going to bars or *chicherias* (like “Rayolero,” see text below).

<i>Sabado, Domingo</i>	<i>Saturday and Sunday</i> (translated from Spanish)
<i>Aqhawasipini</i>	<i>I go to the chicheria</i> (translated from Quechua)

Alberto Arteaga sings of his lust for a *cholita* in “Che Cholita”:

<i>Che Cholita, no seas mala</i>	<i>Hey Cholita, don't be mean</i>
<i>Levanta tu pollerita</i>	<i>Lift your pollera</i>
<i>Hasta la cintura</i>	<i>Up to your waist</i>
 <i>Quiero ver tu enagüita</i>	 <i>I want to see your slip</i>
<i>Tan blanquita, mi negrita</i>	<i>So white, my negrita</i>
<i>Para consolarme</i>	<i>To console me</i> <sup>70</sup>

*Cholo* music claims a distinct “third space” with its irreverent lyrics. It is unlike both the telluric and romantic songs typical of *música folklórica* or instrumental *música autóctona*. This contributes to *cholos*’ assertion of a new, hybrid *cholo* identity.

When a male and a female singer both perform together in *cholo* songs they interact with a unique dialogue. Often a song’s verses alternate between the male and female singer, each one directing the romantic or lascivious texts at the other. In this

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<sup>69</sup> Thomas Turino, “The Charango and the ‘Sirena’: Music, Magin, and the Power of Love” (*Latin American Music Review* 4/1, 1983), 81.

<sup>70</sup> Alberto Arteaga, “Che cholita,” *Enganchados*, (Cochabamba: Banana Records, N/D), cassette. The term *negrita* does not translate well to English. While it literally means “little dark one” or something of the sort, it is often used as a term of endearment from a husband or boyfriend to his wife or girlfriend. Due to the difficulty of translating this term to English, I have chosen to leave it in the original Spanish.

way, the songs become flirtations, and embody the independence and self-reliance typical of *cholitas* (see example below).

Flora Vasquez:

*Ay chiquito, eres bonito*

*Una ..., cariñosito*

*Ay chiquito, you are pretty*

*A ..., very sweet*

*Tanto te quiero, tanto te amo*

*Tu eres mi dueño, ven mi amorcito*

*I love you so much*

*You own me, come my love*

Alberto Aguilar:

*Ay Chiquita, eres bonita*

*Tan gordita, de labios rojos*

*Ay Chiquita, you are pretty*

*So chubby, with red lips*

*Aquí solita, yo te quiero*

*Tanto te quiero, con todo mi alma*

*Here by yourself, I love you*

*I love you so much, with all my soul*<sup>71</sup>

The dialogue between male and female singers heightens the sexual tension created by song lyrics, creating a uniquely *cholo* form of interaction.

As in rural Indian music, neither instrumental nor vocal virtuosity constitute core aesthetic values of *cholo* music. Performers are much more likely to embellish a song text through a witty turn of phrase or double-entendre than they are to add instrumental flourishes or vocal embellishments. This may stem from the fact that in rural areas, where many *cholos* were born, raised, or have familial ties, learning to play the charango is common among young males. Thomas Turino writes of this phenomenon as it occurs in Andean Peru:

Among the campesinos in Canas [Peru], charango performance is viewed as an essential activity for winning the heart of a chola (peasant girl)...For this reason, the charango is not an instrument for specialists. Rather, every young man develops some performance ability, which allows him to participate in the courting cycle.<sup>72</sup>

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<sup>71</sup> Alberto Aguilar and Flora Vasquez, "Ay chiquito," *Alberto Aguilar y Flora Vasquez*.

<sup>72</sup> Thomas Turino, "The Charango and the 'Sirena,'" 82.



The instrumental *zapateo* sections of *wayños* and *zapateados* present themselves as prime territory for an instrumental solo, and in *música folklórica*, this is where solos would occur. However, in *cholo zapateo* sections, the charango simply continues playing the same accompaniment it played during the verses, sometimes slightly more forcefully than before. The influence of the Quechua language may also contribute to the emphasis on lyrical wittiness over instrumental virtuosity. Quechua lends itself well to verbal acrobatics. Informal “song dueling” competitions abound in the valley regions of Bolivia, in which participants alternate improvising verses in Quechua over a predetermined form.<sup>73</sup>

### Large-Scale Extramusical Elements

Dance plays an important role in *cholo* music, as it does in most all Bolivian music. Most of the songs are *wayños* or *zapateados*, and in live performances performers and audience members often dance along to the music, especially in the *zapateo* sections. In performances a group may have several *cholitas* onstage for just such a purpose: dancing and clapping during the *zapateo* sections. Most performances of this music take place in bars or dancehalls, whose open areas accommodate dancing. Interestingly, one might expect *música folklórica*, which incorporates a wide variety of ritmos and corresponding dances, to inspire more dancing by audiences. However, this music is often performed in theaters or concert halls, where seats do not allow room for dancing.

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<sup>73</sup> Some of the most important of these include the improvisational coplas de Todos Santos, performed in the days and weeks leading up to All Saint’s Day (November 1<sup>st</sup>) and coplas de Carnaval, performed in the days and weeks leading up to Carnaval (movable date). For a detailed description of such “song deuling,” see Thomas Solomon, “Coplas de Todos Santos in Cochabamba: Language, Music, and Performance in Bolivian Quechua Song Dueling.” *The Journal of American Folklore* 107:425 (1994): 378-414.

Like the typical *cholita* dress, which fashions a new presentation of identity from elements of indigenous and Criolla dress, performers' dress mediates between Westernness and Indianness. Most male performers wear some sort of understated ensemble of solid-colored pants and shirt, sometimes adorned with an embroidered vest. Female performers dress as typical *cholitas* (See Fig. 3.1 below).



Figure 3.1: Cover of Alberto Aguilar y Flora Vasquez, showing typical male and female dress of Cholo musicians.<sup>74</sup>

In his DVD *El Robacorazones*, Alberto Aguilar dresses in an Andean poncho with a condor (or possibly an eagle, a reference to his last name, which means eagle in Spanish) embroidered on the front. He combines the poncho, an element of dress of indigenous origin and association, with jeans and brown shoes. This kind of mixing of indigenous

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<sup>74</sup> Alberto Aguilar and Flora Vasquez, *Alberto Aguilar y Flora Vasquez*.

and Western cultural elements reinforces the creation of *cholo*-ness as something in-between.

The presence of females in *cholo* folk music, both as singers and solo performers, is remarkable. Females do not usually play a central role in *música folklórica* or *música autóctona*. Most rural charango players are men; in fact, the instrument itself is associated with manhood, and females in rural areas rarely play it.<sup>75</sup> Similarly, in rural tarka or kantu ensembles typical of *música autóctona*, men usually perform all of the parts. *Música folklórica*, while very different from the previous traditions, are also almost always male-dominated. Female *música folklórica* groups do exist, but they tend to be presented more as novelties and less as serious purveyors of the tradition.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, *música folklórica* groups are rarely integrated in terms of gender - they are usually all-male or all-female, and seldom mixed.

Recordings of female soloists and recordings which give double-billing to male and female artists portray the higher level of gender equality that is important in the creation of *cholo*-ness. As discussed in Chapter 2, while they are often discriminated against, *cholitas* enjoy more independence and thus slightly more equality with males than do Criolla women. This hallmark of *cholo* identity is reinforced by *cholitas* in *cholo* folk music.

*Cholos'* public performances of their music most often take place in bars or dancehalls. Some of these may be small *chicherías* on the outskirts of the cities, and others larger performance-oriented venues like la Quinta Primavera in Valle Hermoso or Los Molles on the highway toward Quillacollo. At most of these venues, large and small,

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<sup>75</sup> See Turino, "The Charango and the 'Sirena.'"

<sup>76</sup> There is some evidence that this is slowly changing; more female groups are forming, and are achieving more success than before.

food and drink is served, and people come not only to hear music performed, but to socialize. Thus, before and even during a performance, audience members sit at tables eating, drinking, laughing, talking, and often not paying much attention to the stage. As evenings progress, audiences often focus more on the performers and begin to dance along to the music. Performances of *cholo* music exhibit a porous boundary between performers and audience members, who by the end of the night sometimes end up on stage dancing along to the music. This echoes the more indigenous conception of music as a communal event rather than the Western/*criollo* idea of audience and performers as two distinct entities. The following chapter describes just such an event in detail, a concert I attended at Los Molles in August of 2004.

## CHAPTER 4

### A *CHOLO* MUSIC PERFORMANCE

As we have seen, *cholo*-ness is a mediation between Indianness and *criollo*-ness. *cholos* perform this in-between in a variety of ways, constructing their very identity in the process. One of the most interesting ways in which *cholo*-ness is created is through music. We have seen how this occurs musically in the previous chapter. Chapter 4 examines how this functions in a live musical performance.

Ever since the removal of *chicherias* from the city center to surrounding areas (see Chapter 2), most of the bars, restaurants, and dancehalls where *cholos* gather have remained either outside the city proper or on its fringes. In the Cancha and the neighborhoods to the south of the city, small bars and restaurants that feature live and recorded *cholo* music dot the semi-urban landscape. The larger dancehalls, like la Quinta Primavera and Los Molles, offer more frequent live music events, often featuring musicians from towns outside of Cochabamba such as Arque, Aiquile, Sucre, and even Northern Potosí. Both of these dancehalls are located outside of the Cochabamba city center limits in working-class suburbs: la Quinta Primavera in Valle Hermoso to the southeast and Los Molles on the edge of Cochabamba near Quillacollo to the west. Both are also on dusty, heavily-trafficked major highways linking Cochabamba with the rest of the country. This chapter describes in detail a musical event at Los Molles which I attended on August 6, 2004.

The maid in the house I lived in listened to the radio in the afternoons while she cleaned the kitchen and washed the dishes. Over the course of several days as I would

pass through the kitchen, I heard a kind of music I was unfamiliar with in a recurring radio advertisement. The ad featured snippets of songs played on the charango, and advertised an upcoming concert of this music. At the time I was well-versed in the polished, cosmopolitan *música folklórica* which also uses charango, so I was not surprised to hear the instrument itself. Performers in the ad played the charango and sang in styles completely different styles. My Spanish at the time was fair, but I had trouble understanding the ad because the announcer spoke so quickly and the artificial crowd noises in the background almost drowned out his voice. After hearing the ad several more times, I understood enough of the particulars of the concert to begin making preparations to go the following day.

According to the advertisement, the concert would be held at Los Molles, west of Cochabamba on Avenida Blanco Galindo.<sup>77</sup> I mentioned to those in the middle-class household where I was staying that I would be attending the concert. Over the next day, people in the house tried subtly suggesting I not go for a variety of reasons: the music was out of tune and bad, it was too far, my recording equipment would not be safe, it would be full of *cholos* and thus be dangerous for me, and so on. (None of these turned out to be true). Miguel and Liliana Esprella, my brother- and sister-in-law, decided to accompany me, both to hear the music and to assuage the fears of the household that something would happen to me.

From where I lived in the east-central part of the city we waited for the bus that would take us toward Quillacollo, and when it arrived we crammed ourselves in to the

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<sup>77</sup> Avenida Blanco Galindo is one of Cochabamba's main roads in the western part of the city and the highway connects Cochabamba with the *altiplano*. West of the city, where the highway is still six lanes, the distance is marked by kilometers from the city center, and directions are frequently given in terms of a particular location's relationship to that distance (i.e. *kilometro 6*, *kilometro 2*, etc.).

already full bus. It was late afternoon, so the main roads were backed up with busses, taxis, cars, and motorcycles all struggling to get around each other. As we left the southern part of the city center the neighborhoods became steadily more working class, and garages and warehouses began replacing the shops and restaurants more prevalent downtown. We turned left on Avenida Blanco Galindo, which extends west from Cochabamba almost 20 kilometers before turning south to begin its long, slow climb up to the *altiplano*. This main artery between Cochabamba and La Paz passes through a series of suburbs west of the city, each one increasingly smaller and more rural. Neither of my companions had ever been to Los Molles, but Miguel thought he had vaguely heard of it once and that it was between Kilometer 3 and Kilometer 4. The bus driver also thought Los Molles was somewhere near where we were, but on the other side of the highway, so we got off the bus shortly after Kilometer 3.

Los Molles was difficult to find. We managed to cross the six-lane highway, dodging cars, trucks, taxis, busses, motorcycles, and bicycles. At this point on the road both sides of the highway were lined with featureless, industrial tan and brown-colored warehouse and factory buildings; no signs declared which one was Los Molles. We began to think we had made a mistake and gotten off the bus too soon or too late, until we asked a taxi driver who was stopped letting a passenger out if he knew where it was located. He told us it was just a short walk further west, on the left, where a small group of people had congregated on the side of the highway. After a few minutes of walking, we arrived.

The building looked exactly like the buildings surrounding it, and had no distinguishing signs or features. Between eight and ten people had congregated outside,

some of the women in *cholita* dress. Although the concert was advertised as starting at 4:00 PM, we arrived at 5:30 PM, and from the view of the empty stage we had through the open front door it was obvious nothing had yet begun. The people waiting seemed mildly surprised or amused to see me and my two companions there, and observed curiously as we paid the entry fee and went inside.

The interior of Los Molles was as nondescript as its exterior. The one large room was around 100 feet on each side, significantly larger than one would have expected from the small doorway. There was a sparsely-stocked kitchen and bar to the left after entering, and a small raised stage at the back. The whole interior was covered by an arched tin roof with openings between the roof and the walls, giving the impression that this used to be (or sometimes still was) a warehouse or produce storehouse. The rest of the large, dimly-lit open area was half-filled with tables and chairs and few people. Those who were there sat at tables drinking *chicha*, the only alcoholic drink served that night. Each table had a large plastic bucket in the middle full of *chicha* and a small container to scoop it out and pour it in individual cups. We sat down at one of the tables, ordered food, and listened to the recorded music playing over the speakers as we waited for more of the audience to arrive and the concert to begin.

A steady stream of *cholos* slowly filled the place. The women wore the usual *cholita* clothing and adornments, including *polleras*, embroidered blouses, braids, and gold jewelry. Men that arrived at the concert were generally dressed in shabby pants, shirts, and scuffed shoes. People sat down, joined friends, drank, talked, and laughed. Over the next hour, the noise level in Los Molles increased as more people arrived and while those already there continued to drink *chicha*. By the time the announcer came up



to the microphone in the middle of the stage, it was hard to talk across the table without shouting.<sup>78</sup>

After warming up the crowd with comments about Cochabamba's delicious *chicha* and the beautiful *cholitas* of Cochabamba - commonplace ideas and typical announcer fare - he introduced the first group that would be playing: Teófilo y Jorge Mamani, a group that had come from Northern Potosí to play. At this point it was still early in the evening, and the crowd had not yet begun paying much attention to the music. While this group played, most of the audience socialized, ate, and drank. After each song the audience applauded sparsely, almost as an afterthought. This was an interesting discrepancy between the concert itself and the radio advertisement for the concert, in which it sounded like an entire soccer stadium was cheering in the background as the performers sang. In the live concert, the audience seemed more intent on conversation – in fact, the audience noise between the songs was almost as loud as the music itself.

By around 7:30 PM the second group took the stage. They were from Sucre, and by the time they began the crowd had swelled and seemed to pay more attention to the music. They clapped along during the *zapateo* sections, but were slightly quieter during the songs. The lyrics of the songs this group performed were sung in a mixture of Spanish and Quechua, and dealt with either inebriation or humorous love. (In the final song, for example, singer sang “*Yo tengo miedo casarme*” – “I’m afraid to get married”.)

The next to perform was charango player Ramiro Quispe, accompanied by an unnamed guitarist. Quispe sang his first song, an ode to *Cochalitas* (Cochabamba

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<sup>78</sup> It is common at any sort of concert in Bolivia for an announcer to speak before and during a concert. He or she usually tries to excite the audience into flurries of applause before, during, and after performances.

women), in a mixture of Spanish and Quechua. Quispe sang in a high register, and his consequent vocal timbre was slightly strained. In several of the songs the delayed III-vi cadence (see Chapter 3) came even later than expected. The guitar and charango strings went out of tune frequently, perhaps because of the falling temperatures inside as night fell.

The announcer continued interjecting between songs. He announced that that day was “un día zapatero” (“a *zapateo* day”). He cajoled people sitting in the back to move up to the empty tables in the middle. He called the evening “Una noche de zapateos” (“a night of *zapateos*”). “Quiénes son los solteros” (“Who are the single people?”), he asked the audience. Then he addressed everyone “Las *cholita* de Cochabamba son las más lindas de Bolivia, ¿no es cierto?” (“*Cholitas* from Cochabamba are the prettiest in Bolivia, right?”). Each question or statement succeeded in warming the audience up and commanding a bit more of their attention.

After Ramiro Quispe, Los Tutapuris de Arque, the headlining group of the evening, took the stage. The timbres of the charango and guitar were more strident than in the previous groups. The charango player also sang, and on several songs the guitarist sang a line a third above the melody. This is unusual for this type of music and is more prevalent in *música folklórica* (it does not occur on the group’s recordings).

At one point, before beginning the next song, the charango player announced that they were pleased to be performing *música criolla* that night for the audience. This statement is puzzling in several ways, first because what they were playing is not *música criolla* by most senses of the term. *Música criolla* is synonymous with *música folklórica*,

and the terms are often used interchangeably. Rubén Porco Herrera, charango player and vocalist for the group Norte Potosí, explains *música criolla*.

...la música criolla es la que nace en los diferentes departamentos en las diferentes capitales. Generalmente en este género de música se utiliza la percusión, (el bombo), la guitarra, puede ser también queñas, zampoñas...ya está más modernizado...tenemos sintetizadores, guitarras electroacústicas y complementado con lo que es el bajo electrónico.<sup>79</sup>

...*música criolla* is that which is born in the different departments in the different capitals. Generally, in this genre of music, [performers] use percussion (the bombo), the guitar, possibly also queñas, zampoñas...it is more modernized...we have [in this music] synthesizers, electro-acoustic guitars and [all of this is] complemented by the electric bass.

I also asked the family at a neighboring table and others around me if they thought what the group was playing was *música criolla*, and no one did.<sup>80</sup> “No es *música criolla*, es *música nuestra*” (“It’s not *música criolla*, it’s our music”) one young man told me. (They did not appear to have heard the singer announce the music as *música criolla*, and looked puzzled that I would ask such a question). The only times the music of Tutapuri de Arque possibly could be said to resemble *música criolla* that evening was when the guitarist sang a third above the melody.

If what the group was playing was not *música criolla*, why would the performers announce it as such? It is possible that calling the music they played *música criolla* was a claim of legitimacy by the performers. *Música folklórica*, or *música criolla*, is known as the national music of Bolivia, and began as a refined, polished, and de-Indianized music that utilized instruments and *ritmos* of indigenous groups in European ways.<sup>81</sup> Upper and middle classes accept it as a genuine musical style and often dismiss *cholo* music as

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<sup>79</sup> Rubén Porco Herrera, interview by author, October 10, 2005, Cochabamba, Bolivia, audio recording.

<sup>80</sup> The family asked that I not use their names when writing about our conversation.

<sup>81</sup> See Cespedes, “‘Huayño,’ ‘Saya,’ and ‘Chuntunqui’.”

insignificant. The group may have been attempting to downplay the Indianness of their music, just as *cholos* often differentiate themselves from their rural relatives by deemphasizing indigenous cultural traits.

The evening ended abruptly as the Tutapuris de Arque finished one song, thanked the audience, and left the stage. The audience applauded some, but continued talking, drinking, and laughing as if the music had been secondary to the social component of the evening. I used this time as an opportunity to speak to several more audience members and purchase recordings of some of the groups that performed that night and several that did not. After this, we exited Los Molles, flagged down a speeding taxi on the highway, and rode back to Cochabamba.

### Conclusion

*Cholo* musical performances such as the one studied in this chapter function neither completely as music performances nor solely as communal events. Obviously, rather than simply a concert, the performance I attended was a social event. Música folklórica concerts normally take place in theaters or concert halls, and people who attend come for the express purpose of listening to the music. Performances of música autóctona often have specific cosmological or agricultural functions.<sup>82</sup> For example, a specific style song may be performed only at the beginning of the harvest. Large numbers of people participate, and the music does not exist independently of its critical social function.

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<sup>82</sup> See Henry Stobart, "Flourishing Horns and Enchanted Tubers: Music and Potatoes in Highland Bolivia," *British Journal of Ethnomusicology* 3 (1994): 35-48.

*Cholo* musical performances such as this one exist somewhere in between these two. While people do listen to the music in these performances, they do not come for the music alone. They do not always know who the performers will be or what time the music will start - information that attendees at *música folklórica* concerts are sure to know. Neither do people come to the performances specifically in order to participate in them, as they would in *música autóctona* events. They do take part in the performances in smaller ways, such as dancing along to the music or interacting with the performers. But they also come to socialize, and often whole families come. This was apparent when at one table people were simultaneously filling up each others' *chicha* cups and preparing a bottle of milk for their infant girl, who one man bounced on his lap.

Performances of *cholo* music occupy a middle ground in which audience members come to listen to music and to interact with friends and family in an environment where their *cholo*-ness becomes possible. The music is the catalyst that makes *cholo*-ness possible for the performers and audience members. The constant mediation between Indian and *criollo* musical elements creates and confirms a musical in-between-ness to which audience members respond. The family next to us told me that they felt comfortable and more relaxed at these events. Here, domestic servants no longer have to avoid speaking Quechua, drinking *chicha* loses its negative connotations, and people can enjoy music that would normally be looked down upon by other societal groups. Façades that must be kept up during the workweek can be relaxed at times and places like this. “Aquí, me siento como yo mismo” (“Here, I feel like myself”) one woman told me.

While some may not expressly say they are a *cholo*, or may even deny that such a category exists, comments like this reveal a more fundamental underlying truth. People dress, speak, sing, dance, eat, and participate in events like this one in ways identifiable as distinctly *cholo*; that is, in ways that are in-between. This is confirmed when people say they feel at home, “like themselves,” or show it by dressing a particular way, for example. Where and when this occurs, *cholo*-ness exists.

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